KULTHEA CHRONICLE

The Official Newsletter of GemStone III

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Kulthea in Uproar as Panic Grips Land's Inhabitants!

It has come to the attention of this humble reporter lately that the town of Kelfour's Landing, and indeed the entire environs and far-removed areas, have suffered an unexplained and unwelcome blight of strange occurrences, eerie apparitions, and sudden, unexpected Essence storms, which gather, vent their fury on everything in their paths, and abate as abruptly as they arose.

Other disturbing events, apparently linked to this same evil phenomenon, include reappearances of rarely seen creatures, some wreaking havoc on unwary adventurers in the wilds, others having the temerity to overrun Town Square itself in brazen attacks on peaceable townsfolk. Valiant and stalwart citizens have fought off these incursions successfully, not without deaths and casualties, however, we regret to report.

Such events have not gone unnoticed, and the inhabitants of our fair lands are growing increasingly concerned, restless and fearful.

Rumors are on the rise, and many attribute all the calamity that has befallen us lately to the evil doings in the formerly benign (relatively) precincts of Castle Claedesbrim and its surroundings. Rumblings, storms and streams of odd creatures have been observed issuing from that region, though no one has been able to directly link the disparate catastrophes. No has anyone, so far, try as they might, been able to penetrate the obstructed entrance to the area, or at least no one has survived to return to tell about it.

It behooves us all as loyal citizens to maintain a calm, rationale approach and not to see in every orc that crosses our path the foul machinations of this evil Lord Estrion. Let us continue about our daily life, repelling the dreaded Unlife, and the forces of evil and chaos where and when we encounter it, but let us not become fearful and obsessed with these grim goings-on, without knowing the true nature of things. For after all, knowledge is indeed power, and dark beings like the Foul Lord do depend on our ignorance and fear to triumph over us.

We urge our citizens to be vigilant, and to pay heed to all strange happenings that shall continue to befall us. Be ready, when the time comes, to strike back against evil! ❖

The Great Squirrel Chase by Rhyl Grey

Town Square is a nice place to hang around in, unless a trapped chest gets bungled or an offer of Mass Guarding creates a noisy stampede. Like so many others, I enjoy spending much of my free time in the Square, chatting with friends and listening to gossip.

One evening in late summer I sat under the oak tree, somehow managing to eavesdrop on both the conversation around me and the one carried by my crystal amulet. A large squirrel ran across the ground in front of me, leapt onto the tree trunk, and disappeared into the leaves above. I hardly noticed, as I was listening to Soth angrily claiming that his shield had been stolen while he lay between death and life.

Then a squirrel floated into the middle of the Square. It clutched a large leaf in its paws and used it to catch and ride the wind. I was amused by its antics, up until the moment it hung by its back legs from a branch and snatched something shiny from my neck. Of course it wouldn't steal something easily replaced, such as my amulet. No, the squirrel had filched my first trophy, a silver pendant crafted in the shape of a dragon.

I yelled for help over the amu-net, leapt to my feet and scrambled after the little tree rat until I could go no higher. Its fluffy tail flipped saucily at me as its owner headed up the slope of a roof. I climbed back down (apologizing to the couple in the treehouse on the way), and headed for the grocer's. I hoped that I could convince the squirrel to exchange its shiny treasure for some munchies.

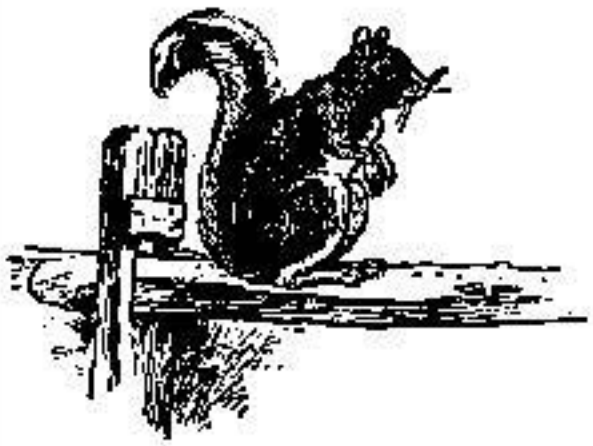
On my way back, I heard that the squirrels had been busy. Someone's rapier was missing. So was a child's lollipop. A pile of fish guts lay in the center of the Square. Five brazen squirrels scurried hither and yon, scattering when anyone came near.

I began scanning the buildings around the Square to see if any of them had sprouted squirrels. When I came to Tyron's Arms, several of the little tree rats were perched on the roof. I'd swear they were laughing at me. One began hurling fish heads and gull wings, and then the whole pack joined in. I hurried into the shop, taking cover and hoping to find a way to the roof. Tyron graciously allowed me access to his back room, but the staircase led down. No luck there.

I went outside and looked up. Not a tail twitched, not a whisker showed. I shook my fist at the roof and tried to figure out where the mangy rodents had gone. Knowing that squirrels tend to run up when they are startled, I began searching rooftops and other high places. I headed for the river, wondering if the fish guts could mean the squirrels hid in the towers there.

Wildlucke called out over the amulets that he'd found a large, mean-looking squirrel at about the same time I stumbled across one. Rapidly slaying the beast, I moved on to the roof of the eastern river tower. While gazing across town, I spied a flash of light at the top of the west river tower...the same place where I'd killed the large squirrel. Perhaps it had been a guard, defending a nest. I grabbed Soth and headed toward the tower. At the top, we found a tattered squirrel nest and inside lay my pendant!

The chase had tired me out, so I went home to bed. Later, I heard that more missing items were recovered.



Could I convince the squirrel to give up its shiny treasure?

The only question that remains in my mind is: Why? Those squirrels have grown alarmingly intelligent. Perhaps too much magic goes on in the Square, or too many people have placed enchantments on that oak tree. Perhaps the squirrels have been studying thieves and took notes. Now I keep close watch on my belongings. And I regret I didn't think to skin that squirrel I slew. If you happen to find any squirrel pelts, I'll buy them from you...hunting enough pelts to make a squirrel-fur lined winter cloak is going to take quite a while. ❖

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Bloodsmythe's Bestiary

Even Cave Trolls Get the Blues: A close encounter with near-greatness

by Bloodsmythe Hunter

It was a brisk spring morning not long ago when I first met Uuuuuh. I had strolled down the Mine Road in hopes of finding a manticore that I might flay alive for no good reason aside from the advancement of science.

The flora along the path toward the mine struggled mightily to hold the morning's load of dewdrops until the sun, which was only then peaking above the treetops on the ridge, came to collect them. It was not until I worked my way down to the valley floor and followed the twisting path all the way to the mine entrance that I heard an odd sound coming from a nearby bush.

No Troll Like an Old Troll

Upon investigating the sound that resembled nothing so much as a long, drawn-out burp, I was astonished to find a wizened cave troll crouching behind the bush. As I walked towards him, he continued making the guttural sound and I realized that he was giving me his most terrifying growl. Despite his obvious seriousness, I could not help but chuckle at this toothless grandfather troll attempting to impress me with his ferocity. Quickly I searched back to my days as an apprentice studying in my master's library for the troll word for "friend." Sadly, there is no such word.

"Tikrelk!" I said, smiling optimistically.

The old troll blinked and then began to laugh himself. He slobbered all over me in the process, then managed to spit out the words he was trying to form. "I'd wuf do, buh I'm a bih old for dah," he replied.

Hockey, Anyone?

Tikrelk, for those readers who may not be familiar with what passes for a language in troll society, is roughly translated as "troll hockey." It is a ghastly game played with a severed head, preferably from a hapless halfling. For all its unpleasantness, *tikrelk* is universally adored by trolls of all sorts and an invitation to a game, while usually fatal if accepted by non-troll, is the closest thing to an offer of friendship to be found in their somewhat impoverished language.

Sitting down behind the bush with my new friend, I soon learned that he had all but exhausted his knowledge of human languages with his first reply. We managed to communicate with his few words of Common, my few words of troll (actually a few words of troll constitutes fluency), and a good deal of sign language. Over the course of our talk, I learned that the old troll was unusually bright for his kind.

His name, as I said, was Uuuuuh. He was petulant at first when I could not gurgle for just the right length of time and insisted that I repeat his name over and over. If I stopped too

Perhaps there are many trolls with the souls of struggling artists...or not.

early or continued too long, he would howl and moan pitifully. With practice, my pronunciation became passable although my throat grew hoarse

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Here is what I encountered in the Mine (I reposted the sign, by the way, thinking that the safety of many is worth more than the artistic respect of practically no one):

	Mine Cave Troll	Tatzelwurm	Cave Worm
Level	12	3	10
Approx CPs	265	150	160
AT	AT4 -5 vs weapons/ AT4 +3 vs *Shockbolt*/AT4 +8 vs *Coldball & Firebolt*	AT4 -11 vs weapons/AT4 -10 vs *Shockbolt*/AT4 +3 vs *Coldball & Firebolt*	AT4 -1 vs weapons/AT4 vs *Shockbolt*/AT 4 +3 vs *Coldball & Firebolt*
Attacks/OB	short sword/127	bite/50 claw/60 charge/40	bite/88 charge/90 ensnare/80
DB	37	45	55
Round Time	15 seconds	8 seconds	10 seconds
Skin	skin/55 silvers	none	none
Treasure	level I chests	none	none
Special	claws if weapon is lost	poison	poison

Face To Face

A Cozy Cave Chat with a Designing Dwarf

An Interview with Lord Kygar Illistari by Jerusha Monfjoy

I find myself standing outside a fairly dark cave, reviewing my options. Should I turn tail and flee, all the way back to the safety and good fellowship of the Landing or, in the tradition of great journalists under fire everywhere, take a deep breath and carry on my mission? Realizing that there weren't that many options if I wanted to keep my Kulthea Chronicle press amulet and that cluttered desk in the corner of the newsroom, I decided to follow through.

"An interview with Kygar?" I thought nervously. "Geez, how did I ever get *this* particular assignment?"

I peered past the mouth of the cave, trying to see what was beyond.

"Isn't Kygar the dwarf who eats elves for breakfast?" I asked myself, then giggled. "No, no–that's just a fairy story, and besides, it had something to do with an ogre, not Kygar. No, Kygar is the GameMaster with the reputation for biting. And for being something of a genius. Don't forget that, Jeri," I reminded myself. "And it's not really that he bites, it's just that he seems to be very clear headed, and unemotional in public; when he speaks, it's straight and to the point. Sometimes, to the rest of us, such focus is unnerving. Okay, let's go!" I took a deep, calming breath, and walked into the lion's...er dwarf's den. He was waiting for me.

Into the Dwarf's Den

"How are you tonight?" Kygar asked politely.

I smiled uncertainly. "Um, fine, thank you. Busy, but good"

He nodded to me, and after politely offering me a seat, settled himself in a large stone chair loaded with overstuffed cushions. I peered around curiously. Smoky torches shed a dim light on this main chamber of Kygar's cave, and their flickering caused dark shadows to dance across the cavern walls. Every now and then, I could see a colorful flash as raw gems, imbedded in the stone walls, caught the torch light. Kygar looked right at home here. Craggy of face, brown eyes and unkempt, long dark brown hair–his only unearthy color came from the simple blue robes he wore. Kygar seemed to be of an indeterminate age, perhaps as old as the rocks themselves. He smiled wryly at me, and I realized that I had been caught staring. I coughed nervously, giving myself a mental nudge.

"Isn't Kygar the dwarf who eats elves for breakfast?" I asked myself...He seemed of indeterminate age, perhaps as old as the rocks themselves.

The Early Years

"Well, let's start at the beginning. How did you first get involved with the game of GemStone III?"

"First involved, as a player you mean?" He seemed caught somewhat off guard by the question.

I nodded, and he thought about it for a moment. "That dates back several years, when I moved from Charleston, SC. to Virginia Beach, Va. I stopped my membership in the network I was on, and then signed up on GEnie when I got here. There were no multi-player games on the service that I was originally on, and when I signed up for GEnie and found these, I was hooked. I played around in several of them, and then even tried some of the other services with games, but I settled into GemStone finally because I thought it was the best."

"In what way did you think it the best? Was this is GemStone II?" I felt my old reportorial confidence returning, and pressed him on this.

He shook his head slightly. "No, this was GemStone III. I missed the original, and came in shortly after GemStone III opened. I think it was mainly the attitudes of the other players. So many other games seemed to be centered on players fighting players. I liked the general cooperative nature of GemStone III better. After I played a lot of different games for a while, I got involved as a staff member on another service. But I stayed active in GS during that time."

"Oh?" My eyebrow quirked upwards. "What made you change over? What made you decide that you wanted to work here, instead of where you were before?"

"The service I was working with got 'absorbed' into another service and I didn't want to go with them." He shrugged slightly. "I was a host in a chat room deal. In fact, that chat room still runs on the new service."

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(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 4)

"When did you join the staff here in Gemstone III?"

"Let's see, that would be Christmas time of 1991." He nodded to himself. "Yes, two and a half, almost three years ago. I was an AGM for about three months, and then became a full GameMaster shortly after."

"It's been a while then. Why did you want to becoming a GameMaster? What was the initial attraction?"

"That's not an easy question to answer. I think that being a GM kind of comes naturally to me. I have been GM'ing games for many years, since the birth D&D. I enjoy GM'ing. It's a creative outlet. I'm also sure there is probably a control issue here, but having a big ego isn't a bad thing, as long as you don't let it ruin your (and everyone else's) life."

He grinned broadly at me and continued, after a slight pause. "When the opportunity to be a GameMaster in GemStone came along, I jumped at the chance, and I have never regretted that decision. I love setting up areas and situations, and having people pit themselves against my machinations. It's all about having fun."

"Do you miss playing? Or do you still keep your hand in it?"

Kygar smiled at me. "Oh, I still play. Not as often as I would like to, though. I would miss it horribly if I stopped playing altogether."

A Real Class Act

"Ah, I see." I smiled back. "Well, when you play, what profession is your favorite one? Have you sampled?"

"My favorite class is healer, though I have played all of the classes at some time or another."

"Why the healer profession?"

"I'm not a power player, I'm a roleplayer. Even as a GM, the vast majority of my work is founded deep in the roleplaying aspect of establishing history, background information, societies, etc. I call it 'world logic'. I like to play healer the most because it is a class that revolves around roleplaying and character interaction. There is less pressure to go out and master the game mechanics in order to beat some mechanical orc into the ground.

"The healer deals mainly with other players. As with a lot of other players, there were times before I became a GM that I would log on for a couple of hours, or even a whole evening, and never pick up a weapon or set foot outside of town. When playing other classes, this isn't really reasonable conduct for the characters. Fighters, mages, sorcerers, et al, need to go out into the wilds and 'attack the world.' The healer allows the world to come to them."

He stopped for a moment, then added with a sigh, "Though playing isn't quite the same for me anymore."

I was puzzled. "How so?"

"Well, as a GM, I know how everything works," he replied. "The mystery of it all goes away. I like to interact with other players, but knowing the game as I do now, there is little that can surprise me."

I nodded. "I could see how that might happen."

"I guess that's why I always tell people to concentrate less on mechanics and more on enjoying themselves." He chuckled wryly.

An Unexpected Tour

"What would you say is your realm of expertise in GS?" I gazed at him, not really knowing which of his many talents he would choose.

Kygar looked a little surprised by the question. "I don't see myself as concentrating on any one aspect of GS. I have tried to get my fingers into just about everything. I guess if I had to pick one thing, it would be area or creature design. But I have also done spells and all sorts of mechanics."

"Master of all trades?" I smiled coyly at him.

He grinned. "I don't know about master...but I like to be involved in everything."

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(Cave Troll Blues, continued from page 3)

in the process. He told me his name had once been Grrrrr, but that it had been changed to the name Uuuuuh when he lost the last of his teeth and no longer could growl properly. Not wanting to spend the whole afternoon giving speech lessons, I told him my name was Mub.

The Unknown Poet

After we had talked for quite some time, Uuuuuh took on a conspiratorial tone and said he had something to show me. With a furtive glance at the mine entrance, he dashed up to the old sign there and pried it loose. Returning to the bush with his prize like a dog might with a bone, he flipped over the old piece of wood. The front, of course, bears the troll warning "ter ukit trirk." I now learned that the back was inscribed in smaller script with a series of troll words. The ancient troll proudly announced that he was the one living troll poet, and that this was his life's master work.

It seems that he had labored on this poem for years. Only in his dotage had it occurred to him to write his master work down. Unfortunately for him, no sooner had he done so when a young troll who was tired of incursions into the mine had taken the piece of wood my friend had used and nailed it to the entrance of the mine to warn strangers. This seemed quite tragic to me, but my troll poet chuckled over it and insisted that his fellow trolls had honored him greatly by putting his art on public display. I didn't have the heart to point out to him that nobody could read the *back* of the sign when it was fastened to the mine entrance.

My talk with Uuuuuuh...excuse me, Uuuuuh...lasted most of the day and might have gone on into the night except that he expired of old age in the midst of explaining why it was that trolls eat everything they come across. His explanation seemed to be boiling down to "because they can" when he

(Continued on page 24)

(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 5)

"Do you have a favorite area or critter that you have designed?"

Kygar got a twinkle in his eye. "Shall I show you my zoo?"

"Ooooh!!!" I exclaimed, nodding repeatedly. "I love tours!"

Kygar made sure I was following, then led me down a dark tunnel into what he calls the Bestiary. I was gushing. "This is the best part of interviewing for me...", until I saw what this room contained. "Oh, gadzooks!" I whispered, then fell silent. Platforms and pedestals were scattered around the cave, most of which held the form of a monster–sohleugir chieftain, spectral monk, kral merc, what-have-you. I repeated the names to myself as we passed them by. I was hoping that these were merely mock ups, or wax type figures, but that notion was quickly shattered.

"All of the creatures here I either designed myself," Kygar explained, "or participated in their design. Fortunately," he grinned, "they are all 'frozen'."

I smiled weakly. "Uh huh. Quite fortunate...for me." Gracious, they *were* real! "This is quite a um...collection." I gulped nervously as I walked past something a small plaque identified as a minor gogor. It seemed to follow me with its malevolently glowing green eyes. I glanced at its long, sharp, bloodstained claws, and hurriedly caught up with Kygar, who had already moved on ahead.

He was saying, "Let's see, I think the first ones I helped do were the lizardmen. The sohleugir." Kygar indicated an immobile reptilian creature off to his right. "One of the other GMs was doing an area and needed some creature design concepts. I proposed the lizardmen and outlined the design specs. Another GM implemented them. All of the others came about as I built the Seolfar Strake and associated areas."

I stopped again by another beast I had never seen before. This one was labeled a kiskaa raax. It appeared lizard-like, with a stubby, triangular tail covered with a luminous chitinous plate. Hard scaled and spiky. Ugh. "Gads, Kygar..." I said with a small amount of revulsion. "These are really

(Continued on page 9)

Song of the Spider Temple: Forty Legs Spindly by Mojo Tremolos

In peaceful woodlands by a brook,
Tucked deep inside a forest nook,
A dark and sinister temple lurks,
Befouling Iloura's beautiful works.

Unholy rites are practiced there.
An altar black looms in the air.
Priests of darkness, acolytes,
Praise a spider in eldritch rites.

Bloated Hrassk the spider god!
Swollen mammoth arachnids trod,
Within the tracery overhead
Beyond the onyx door they're fed.

Insatiably the great bugs eat,
A feast of blood and human meat.
Black-souled servants serve the meal,
Praising Hrassk in prayer they kneel.

Within this temple we came at last,
Disgusted by this dark repast.
We set about to stop the fiends,
By force, by magic, by any means.

Like spiders' legs, in eight there are,
Corridors that stretch afar.
One central chamber for their rites,
An altar rises to the heights.

And cells for those who will be eaten,
Amply fed so flesh will sweeten,
To please the giant spider's taste.
No human flesh will go to waste.

Within each room we slew the priests,
And servants there preparing feasts.
And acolytes we slew as well,
We watched their bodies roil and swell.

A ghastly sight to make one choke,
Bursting open in wisps of smoke,
Bodies spewed forth spider hordes.
We stared in horror, lost for words.

At length we came to the onyx door,
Fearful of what there lie in store.
Out of the chamber and into lair,
Towering spiders scurrying there.

Suddenly something descended on me,
Demons of essence and electricity.
Lost in a limbo of featureless black,
I scrambled until I made my way back.

One friend lay dead, others in cocoons,
Arachnids inflicting terrible wounds.
Others escaped before they would fall.
And 40 legs spindly and horrid I saw.

Dashing for cover I raced for a door.
Spelled by a priest, I fell to the floor.
Covered in webs, priest cursing at me,
I prayed that Eissa was smiling on me.

The priest gestured, I cringed as I saw,
Essence brought forth in a great fireball.
It roared from his hand as he issued a shout.
Stunned and on fire I swooned and passed out.

I came to and passed out often that night,
The priest never letting me out of his sight.
When at last he was gone, I escaped my cocoon,
Thanking the gods for a generous boon.

The cell now was empty, I feared for my soul,
I hastily rang out of that evil hole.
A pulse in my ring...in the cell I remained!
I let out a wail, a woeful refrain.

(Continued on page 7)

A Nose for Trouble

By Schnozz Sunbifer

Say, heya, all you folks! Me name is Schnozz. I 'spose afore I start talkin' I should tell yas how I gots me name. Everbody asks, an' I don't 'spect ya'll are gonna be any diffr'ent. It ain't too special, like some o' those elfie names what ya hear, like Running Deer or sech. It ain't cuz I gots this great sense o' smell, or cuz me nose is real purty or sumthin'. I got me name Schnozz cuz o' me cousin Bleeds, an' it's cuz o' me that Bleeds got his name too.

See, I's a human, an' am from the human part–the big part–o' me family. Bleeds, he's from the elfie part o' the family, the part we humanfolk don' talk 'bout much, 'ceptin' when we's drunk an' feelin' kinda funny an' all. It was one o' those times that we gots our names, when we wuz both little kids an' din't have no name yet, 'ceptin' mebbe, "Hey, you" or sumthin' simlar. We wuz both 'bout 10 years old, an' there was a big party goin' on at the ole ancestral family castle.

In a corner of the Kelfour's Landing Main Town Square...the carryin' on that's goin' on in there!

Everbody got funny that day, even me 'n' Bleeds. We wasn't 'sposed to, but the big folk weren't feelin' up to watchin' out fer us, an' when they turned theys' backs we snuck a big flask o' sumthin' what tasted horrible but made us feel right silly offa sumbuddy's table. We took it outside to th' little house where they keep alla horsies, an' shared the whole flask together. That was when I dared Bleeds ta jump outta th' big oak tree just outside o' the horse house.

Now, I didn't 'spect he was really gonna do it, but there he went up the tree and jumped! He tried ta do this neat flip, but instead landed on his face.

It shore looked like it hurt, an' I felt kinda bad, but when he got up he was bleedin' everwhere an' for some reason I started ta laugh. That was when he punched me inna nose. I bled a lot too, an' me nose swelled up big as a pumpkin!

Now, normally we woulda got in a mess o' trouble fer sumthin' like this, but all th' old folk was feelin' so silly that they decided it was time fer us both ta get our big-folk names instead. So we become Bleeds 'n' Schnozz, an' life ain't never been th' same since.

Bleeds, he went ta this place called Kelfour's Landing (I knows how ta spell it, cuz I checked!) an' I stayed here ta learn to fight. I don' know what he's been doin' all these years, but just this week I decided it wuz 'bout time fer me ta pay him a visit (an' maybe punch him inna nose, but don't tell him). So I gots me stuff

(Continued on page 12)

(Song of the Spider Temple, continued from page 6)

I was trapped in the hellhole, and the only way out,
Led through priests and their servants lurking about.
I was trapped and could never win to the door,
Where spiders colossal covered the floor.

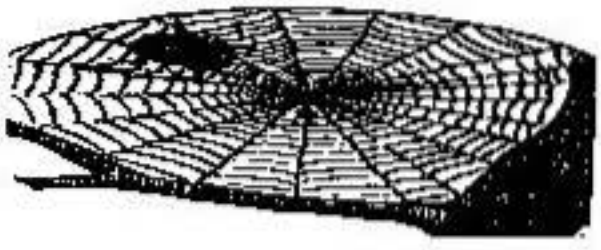
Getting timely assistance from friends on the net,
Hiding and sneaking would get me home yet.
I hid and preceded to go through the door.
A priestess could see me, to her dark god she swore.

In my haste I'd forgotten to sneak through the room!
Mandibles snickered, preparing my doom,
A horrible sound that made my skin crawl.
And 40 legs spindly and horrid I saw.

I ran like a schoolgirl without looking back,
Gaining the room with the altar of black.
Safe here but still my heart beat apace.
I knew not the way to get out of the place.

Fearful of what lay behind every turn,
I got on the net to see what I could learn.
My thoughts filled with horror, as I thought back in awe,
Of the 40 legs spindly and horrid I saw.

Assistance forthcoming, I was rescued at last.
By a ranger of valor and a glorious past.
But my sleep now is trouble, I've been dreaming of all,
Those 40 legs spindly and horrid I saw.



Lord Strom's Plain Truth:

A Trip through the Broken Lands

by Lord Strom O'Berin

Getting into the Broken Lands requires that one has achieved a certain amount of power. Power in this instance is a combination of skills and levels or, in cases of skill lack, your level alone can get you in.

At Level 28 you can get in, regardless or your training. The gods have determined that being in your 28th year of training is power enough. Of course, this means a lot of monks and liches must die. Think of them as the steel golems of old. You fight endless swarms of these and reconnoiter the area until you know it better than the back of your hand!

With some advanced planning you can get into the Broken Lands to die even more quickly. Several skills are used to determine your power. I will not say how much is enough. To quote one god, "You should never reach a point where training in any skill is too much." There are three skills which definitely are used to determine your survival power.

Vital Survival Skills

The first skill is that of runes. To enter the Broken Lands from the Misty Chamber in the Monastery, you must read a rune that is spinning like a coin (which, by the way, looks great with the graphic front end). I would think it obvious that the better you are with runes, the quicker you can decipher this marvel. I should make note here that you also may have need of runes to add to the spells you know, in order to have a decent chance of survival. One which comes immediately to mind is *True Breath*. Those fog beetles smell real bad.

The second and third skills are necessary because of the terrain you must travel in. The Broken Plains are filled with shattered rocks, boulders, and fog. These all combine to make travel difficult and dragging impossible, whether you have a container of loot or a dead companion in tow.

To Spell or Not to Spell?

I want to make a caution and an observation here. The 25th rank spells from both open and closed channeling are useless here and further on. The Plains seem to be within some large enclosed area, so *Call Lightning* will not work (see "Spells, Open Channeling"; #125 in the tomes). The Dark Grotto is a cavern, so *Call Lightning* will not work there either. Rangers, clerics, healers, and sorcerers should plan on other spells, and fighters, it appears, need to depend on a great deal of good luck.

A vital survival skill in the Broken Lands is that of deciphering mystic runes.

The spell *Transference* (see "Spells, Closed Channeling"; #125 in the tomes) is another that will not work. *Transference* allows one to travel to some person. Because of the level/power requirements, the spell is disallowed in these areas. The chances of survival for someone without the power is slim. I can only think the gods fear some youngster might circumvent their prohibition and enter the Broken Lands in this manner. One cannot even use this spell unless one is close to, or already of, the proper power. Healers and clerics in particular have several spells they will get first to fulfill their calling. All this really does is make getting aid harder. I did mention familiars, rings, and ESP are prohibited here too?

Not Just Social Climbing

Climbing is a requisite to clamber over the rocks and other debris. While it is true you do not have to have much skill here, you had better have some. With weak climbing skills, it takes you a lot of time to scale each obstacle. When you leave one area to enter the next, you wait for time to pass to ready yourself for the ordeal to come.

While you are waiting helplessly, the hooded figure who was waiting for you has a field day. He (or she) casts a *Dispel* on you, then a *Vulnerability* (so you just lost that *True Breath* and are now -25RR). You are now weakened and, for fun, the figure casts an *E-wave* to keep you helpless a while longer. As the figure prepares to blast you, a fog beetle runs in and lets loose a fog of poisonous gas. Since your *True Breath* is gone and you are prone, you do not dodge the cloud. You are dead even before the figure's *E-blast* or *Touch of Destruction* hits you and shatters your skull.

Perception is another skill that helps. With greater perception, you can find easier paths to take. If you can find paths matched to your skill, you can get the time to cast a spell to protect yourself or, perhaps, calm that beetle or figure and replace a spell you lost. Perception is also necessary to get to the Dark Grotto, although someone else can point the way for you.

In the Dark Grotto, shortness and crushing weapons skill come in handy, but that is a story for another day.

Stay safe for now, and if not, make sure you have a good healer close at hand! ❖

(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 6)
ugly monsters!" I pointed to the kiskaa raax, then back to the gogor.

Kygar nodded, and his smile broadened. "Those are the 'johnny come lately' ones." He pointed to something I immediately recognized, a magnificent wild cat. It was a puma, with its tawny, almost golden coat of luxurious fur highlighted with pristine white. It had a feral gleam in its eyes, showing it to be a predator in every sense of the word.

Logical Creatures

Kygar went on to explain in depth his philosophy on critter creation. "As I got more and more into doing creatures, the logic I used for them became more and more complex. I began to work with the idea of creatures having entire spell lists that they would choose from in an intelligent manner, rather than just one or two random spells. So the latest run of creatures from me, starting with the hooded figures, are focused more on the magical realm than the arms realm. While the earlier creatures, such as the lizzies, pumas, rats and cats, etc., are more arms-user type."

I nodded, my eyes still on the puma. "Does this increase the difficulty of arms users actually killing them?"

Kygar nodded back. "I think so."

"This a good thing?" I smiled.

"A good thing? Well, let's say I don't think it's a bad thing. I think we need to have a mix, a wider diversity than we have now. But that does not invalidate the worthiness of the creatures as they exist. That make sense?"

"Yes." I nodded.

"I recognize that some classes, some character types, have no hope against some of the high-end creatures I have done."

I assumed, to myself, that this meant that there would someday be other critters created to fill in the gaps. But as that was a big assumption, I decided to move on.

"If you had your druthers, what changes would you make to GS?"

Kygar thought about that one for a little while. "You know, that's a hard one to answer for one major reason. I don't see GemStone as a static game environment. The day that GemStone is 'done' is the day it dies. GemStone will always need to change and grow to stay viable. So when you ask what changes I would like to see, well, *everything* at some point!" Kygar grinned..

I laughed. "Okay. Fair enough," I said smiling.

"Now if you mean what immediate needs the game has, that's a different matter," he interjected.

"You can address that too." I gave him a small wink.

"Right now, we need some more high-level creatures. Not just greater diversity in the levels covered, but to extend the upward limit also. The Arms Realm needs some serious work done to it to make playing an arms user unique and exciting. The Society system needs to be expanded to include one or two more societies. And the spell lists in general need a lot of work. Now, the good thing is that all of these are actively being worked on, though I'm not be able to offer specific comments on any pending projects."

I smiled to myself. I had heard that proviso before.

"Unfortunately, direct contributions from me by way of new creatures, new areas, etc., is about to be over."

Mysterious Future

"I have heard that you have a new project. What can you tell me about it?"

Kygar said, "That's correct, I'm involved in a new game that's being developed. I'll be heading that game up as Product Manager. I can't say too much about it yet. It will be a multiplayer roleplaying style game centered around solving mysteries. Its name will be Modus Operandi. It's a project that we are doing in partnership with Mysterious Press, a major publisher of mystery books." He chuckled... um...mysteriously. "Coming to a network near you!"

"Any time frame on when it will be available to the public at large?"

"Afraid I can't comment about time frames or possible network availability yet."

I got an impish smile on my face. "Well, I had to try..." Kygar tickled me, and I grinned back unrepentantly.

"However," he continued, "one thing that I do hope is that even with full-time involvement in this new game, I want to still be able to come back to my old haunting grounds here and continue to throw monkey wrenches into things."

Kygar chuckled quietly. "I don't plan to be gone entirely."

"Well, it would be a shame if you were totally gone. I think you would be missed...Oh!" I snapped my fingers as something popped into memory. Kygar raised an eyebrow in my direction. "Are you still hiring for Modus Operandi? I seem to recall a reading a few posts in the BB regarding possible positions."

Kygar said, "People can send requests for applications to MYSTERY$ if they are interested. We will be looking to expand the staff with assistants when we get ready to go live."

"All right," I looked over my list of notes, "do *you* have anything else you would like to add? About life in general, GS, or words of wisdom, etc.?" I smiled at him.

"Hm, GemStone words of wisdom..." he smiled. "Don't forget to have fun. That's why we are all here

(Continued on page 12)

"I don't see myself as concentrating on any one aspect of GS. I have tried to get my fingers into just about everything... GemStone will always need to change and grow to stay viable."

GemStone III

Fame Rankings

by Zharahk Darcsumner October 27

FIGHTER		THIEF		MAGE		CLERIC	
Waldo2 Ptolomy	32	Arturo Bresnahanini	48	Kodos Corralias	52	Gillaume d'Clans	54
Hexxon Glenriver	31	Sagan Necropoliss	37	Dartaghan Darkstar	51	Krisenfest Rote-Kapelle	49
Metaboculous Griden	29	Aurien Babazhook	34	Pan True-Silver	49	Raphael Kinevon	48
Geoff Stonehand	25	Bleys Airelious	32	Catrissa Dakhati	42	Sydna Warrick	44
Skaggs Amillion	24	Mikhail Minnehan	32	Odds Bodkins	39	Ladydawn Diamond	42
Cinabar Cederic	24	Kree Morlain	30	Whilder Planrathe	32	Aeklug Baeyenbreghaldt	41
Berr Zerkcer	24	Blades Clanners	27	Marc Spellslinger	32	Palma Smyth	39
Gilthor Longblade	24	Kendrick MacLaer	27	Cerulean Kuykendahl	30	Qunitazzeldon Azzalnecrador	38
Kyreth No-Name	23	Plover WraithBane	27	Certain Justice	30	Vizuxa Bluestar	38
Shardin QuickSword	22	Moonpie Legend	26	Soniya Arain	29	Lairaerrykthrok TykilVuul	33

HEALER		BARD		RANGER		SORCERER	
Strom O'Berin	87	Traylor Slawn	48	Trachten Hickapod	45	Thalior Farthor	53
Kayla Kyndhart	55	Oghier Sleepytoes	47	Maruko Ashimine	42	Nixie Trevize	45
Caretaker D'BoldHome	37	Enegue Lion Heart	44	Kenner Boh	39	Airioch Ramthanodox	33
Woundhealer odlaw	34	Logun Ulthwe	36	Sloan Sahlas	37	Charms D'Warfling	32
Visarli Romaset	30	Heron Vestone	33	Fxg Lyon	36	Bloodsmythe Huntsman	30
Unum LUX	28	Orlando Vern	31	Erek Snow Mane	36	Xar Perkintile	29
Mara Tallow	27	Zimbangu Atlantia	29	Kali Sablefen	31	Thoth Star	22
Palance Buckhannah	24	Mackeli Spellsword	26	Cerul Terk	31	Hastur FlutterWing	22
Atari Miyamoto	22	Shael Aasimoom	23	Lyrista Windsong	30	Chandra Truespel	21
Malvolio Berlusconi	18	Erion Kulsen	22	Dara Lundy	29	Abdul al'Hazred	21

COMMON MAN		HIGH MAN		HALF-ELF		WOOD ELF	
Krisenfest Rote-Kapelle	49	Raphael Kinevon	48	Kayla Kyndhart	55	Thalior Farthor	53
Heron Vestone	33	Trachten Hickapod	45	Gillaume d'Clans	54	Mara Tallow	27
Ardeas Vestonaire	26	Common Man	44	Nixie Trevize	45	Wildlucke Elfsign	26
Geoff Stonehand	25	Palma Smyth	39	Catrissa Dakhati	42	Gildas Laogh	21
Kyreth No-Name	23	Qunitazzeldon Azzalnecrador	38	Maruko Ashimine	42	Lusus Lorenion	16

HIGH ELF		FAIR ELF		DWARF		HALFLING	
Strom O'Berin	87	Arturo Bresnahanini	48	Traylor Slawn	48	Kodos Corralias	52
Finrod Felagund	21	Sydna Warrick	44	Oghier Sleepytoes	47	Dartaghan Darkstar	51
Crimson Of_Inverness	15	Vizuxa Bluestar	38	Aeklug Baeyenbreghaldt	41	Pan True-Silver	49
Phillip Tor	11	Logun Ulthwe	36	Caretaker D'BoldHome	37	Odds Bodkins	39
Aerwyn Amurelith	10	Woundhealer Odlaw	34	Hilgavolkas LaJolla	28	Lairaerrykthrok TykilVuul	33

O, Thou Cruel, Inconstant Architecture

Part I: The Same Old Song

by Contra Songstren

Forevermore.
I'll love you always and,
He whispers to her,
Forevermore.
As his lips brush close to hers,
She laughs and dances merrily away,
Holding his promise close to her heart.
The year goes by and still they court,
Their days filled with dance and sport.
But shortly there will arrive
News of great import.
His Lord, his Liege,
Away he must go for He is besieged.
And so he arms himself, to go forth and strive
As he rides forth to help win the day,
He turns to her and begins to say,
Forevermore,
When I return, we shall marry and love...
Forevermore.
He has been taken by surprise.
Those bandits had worn a priestly guise.
He fought brave and hard that day,
But in his own blood he lay.
His last gasp in red, frothy spray,
Forevermore.

The maiden is still there by the gate,
Her love's words still running through her mind
Determined to learn his passing fate.
And though she's not certain what she will find,
The maiden is there, and still she waits.
But the truth we know, and though we abhor,
The sad truth is she'll wait, forevermore.
Forevermore.

As the last chord sang from the mandolin, and the final note of my voice trailed off, there was nothing but silence from the gathered crowd in the inn. That is one of my favorite reactions, because I knew they were enthralled by my music. Those moments of silence as they realize that the song is over, that they were lost in the music, as the real world begins clamoring

Kaerilyn and I were inseparable. We spent our days in the forest and our nights curled up by the fire, in each other's arms.

for their attention again. Uproarious applause suddenly assaulted me as men and women of all races were simultaneously clasping my hand, patting my back, demanding more music and throwing silver at me. I knew better, however; the secret to success was in keeping yourself in demand. I made no more music that eve.

"I'm sorry, but I'm rather tired and must retire for the night, rest assured, gentle people, that I shall sing once more tomorrow evening."

Disappointed exclamations arose from the entire crowd and as I moved past the innkeeper, I asked him to send my supper up to my room. Nodding his agreement, he turned and barked at his daughter to ready my food and I made my way upstairs.

After dinner, I thought about my upcoming journey to Kelfour's Landing. My mother had suggested I go there to make my fortune. All kinds of tales had reached us in Belryn Keep about the adventures to be had in and around the Landing. I think many shook the tales off as sheer fancy, but my mother and I could hear many truths in those tales. This is a talent that seems to run in my mother's family, and has served me many a time. I had studied as a bard for the past five years, and could go no further in Belryn Keep. It was time for me to move on. Hopefully, while in Kelfour's Landing, I'd have the chance to meet and learn from *The Bard*, Lord Enegue Lionheart. Even if I couldn't learn from him, the training to be had in the Landing far surpassed all that could be had at home. It was obvious that my future lay in that far-off town.

"I'll be there in four days, provided I don't stop and spend more time at any inns along the way," I thought to myself. Surely my destiny could stand another four days' wait.

Lying down for sleep, my thoughts drifted back to my childhood and all the events that led down this path I had taken, to this quest to earn fame, fortune, and knowledge.

❖❖❖❖

My earliest memories are of my mother, Gwendolyn, singing to me. She has one of those pure voices, the type that makes you believe in angels. She is a human bard. My father was an elf. My mother wouldn't tell me much about him; not what type of elf, from

(Continued on page 14)

(Nose for Trouble, continued from page 7)
together, an' started on me trip. It took me a while, but I finally got ta Kelfour's Landing, an' that's where me *real* story starts, cuz let me tell you, friend, this town is one *weird* place!

Weren't five minutes after I walked inta town, that some bloke walked up ta me while I was standing inside the city gates, countin' the guards (you should always count th' guards when ya come to a new city, just in case! Dat's what Bleeds sez, anyways). Anyhoo, I was thinkin' of headin' south inta the city, when suddenly this bloke named Fred pops inta view. I'm thinkin' that Fred is kinda a silly name, when this Fred guy starts ta talk.

"Excuse me!" he says. (I know he talks kinda funny, but I's tryin' ta be acrit.)

"Yeah?" I asks, wondering what this clod wants.

"I'm new!" he sez. "I need help!"

So I looks at him. He's nekkid as a jaybird! Ain't wearin a thing! "You shore does," I sez, an' leave afore he tries sumthin'.

Already I'm havin' a kinda bad impression o' this Kelfour's place, what with nekkid folk accostin' ya on the street! So now I's tryin' ta shake this nude guy, and I head south and then slip into this little place what has a sign that sez "Furrier" on the oustide. Furrier than what I dunno–maybe there's some kinda hairy contest goin' on in town–but I figure mebbe somebody there kin tell me where I might sell this pelt I took from this rabid sheep what attacked me outside the gates. So I gets inside and realize I got real lucky, cuz I done stumbled into a pelt shop. So I hands the pelt to th' proprieter, an' asks him what I might gets fer my pelt (I means the sheep's pelt what I got, not *my* skin. I 'spose you knew that, tho.) So anyways, I asks him.

He looks at it an' sez "I'll give you 10, possibly as much as 13 for it!"

Now what kinda answer is that, I asks ya? He gots the derned pelt right there in his hands; how many times does he gotta touch it ta give ya a firm price? I gets kinda mad an' yells at him a bit.

"Fer cryin' out loud!" I yells. "Ya got the derned thing right there in front of yer face! How much are ya gonna pay?!?"

I musta scared 'im, cuz his hands started a-shakin' an' he forks over 10 coins fer the derned pelt. Figures.

I heads west a bit along the North Ring Road, tho I din't see no rings layin' about (an' I looked real hard, too) an' then south on the first street I sees–Eogsmith Street. Lo an' behold when I get there, I finds meself face-ta-face with a bath house! Now I figger that I could use a bath, even tho I took one last month, cuz I's new in town an' not smellin' like a wolverine kin shore help a guy make friends. So I goes inside.

Right away when I goes in I sees this neat-lookin' tapestry, an' then this feller comes in the front door, runs past me, an' goes behind that very tapestry! I figger that must be where all the baths are, so I goes behind the tapestry too.

Well, the feller is there all right, but it ain't a very big room, an' it only has one real small bath. Their bath looks kinda like a chair, an' there's this chain hangin' from the ceiling, an' this feller is yankin' on the chain like his life depended on it! He pulls it eight or nine times afore he notices me, an' then he musta got mad cuz he glares at me an' starts jumpin' up and down! Looked derned silly doin' it too, like some 12-year-old kid. So he leaves, an' I'm a-lookin' at this chain, wonderin' what's so fun about pullin' on it. I tries it once, an' a whole mess o' water comes shootin' down the middle o' this chair an' disappears! Warn't too excitin' tho, an' then that same feller showed up an' glared at me agin. I figgered mebbe he had paid ta be alone in there fer a while, so's I left. I decides I'll gets me a nice hot

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(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 9)
after all. I think that all too often it is easy to get so attached to the people and things in GemStone, that we start taking it too seriously."

I nodded. "That's true."

"You only get angry when you care about something after all." Kygar winked at me.

"Anything else you want to ask?"

"Hmmm." Another look at my notes... "Nope, actually, that was it."

He gave me a sidelong glance. "Perhaps dispel the myths about my tendency to bite people?"

I flushed guiltily, feeling like I had been caught in the harboring of false assumptions. I cleared my throat. "Well, I'll add that. Cause I thought you did...for a while." I coughed.

A Visit to the Laboratory

Kygar smiled mildly. "I do tend to be pretty serious and business like when I talk to folks, but I am really a very easygoing person." He gave me a wink. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "I didn't show you the lab! Everyone always wants to know where I concoct some of my exotic ideas." With that he led me through a natural arch in the cave, and into his Laboratory. "Well, this is it!"

Noxious fumes and strange odors filled the air in this small cave, making my eyes water. A old wooden table stood in the center of the cave, loaded with odd equipment and bits of things I didn't want to examine too closely. I could also see a well-used hammer and anvil, large brazier and a brass athanor. Curiosity over came squeamishness, and I peeked at the stuff on the table–a large mortar and pestle, a grinding stone, a glass beaker, an iron pot, a ceramic pot, a filter and a glass rod.

Kygar explained, "All the tools for making magical items, sewing together new creatures, etc."

I giggled a little, thinking of the completed beasties I had seen in the other room; they all started right here.

(Continued on page 18)

(Nose for Trouble, continued from page 12)
bubble bath later, afta I et my fill o' supper at th' local inn.

So I leaves the bath house, an' keeps headin' south. I'm in a corner of what appears ta be the main Town Square, right near this inn. It looks as if there's a whole lotta stuff goin' in the center o' the Square, so I wanders over that ways a bit.

The carryin' on that's goin' on in there! I don' even know where ta begin! First there's this feller named Harcourt, an' he seems ta be arguin' with most everbody there. I can't quite figger out what all th' commotion is about, but then some lady makes the mistake o' smilin' at Harcourt, an' he drags her west an' then *everbody* jumps up an' starts runnin' that way, pullin' out theys' weapons an' preparin' spells. I guess they all wanted ta help kill that girl fer smilin'. Twer en't very nice by me, but hey, it's theys' own business.

So I sits down fer a spell ta rest me feet, when suddenly this dwarf appears outta nowheres! I duck my head in case it's gonna start rainin' dwarves, but then I sees that he gots one o' them gold rings on his finger, so I figger he must be some kind o' dwarf Navigator. That's when th' breeze shifted, tho, an' I caught wind o' this gaffer, an' I realized that he shore don't *smell* like no Navigator! I wrinkles me nose and coughs a bit, an' I guess he got the hint 'cause he pulls this decomposing fish outta his beard an' then heads over ta the inn, I guess ta eat his fish. Geez, this town is fulla characters!

I leans against the benches ta try restin' again, when suddenly this woman named Sleepy runs through the square, an' a second later comes this whole *mob* o' people, swords an' shields drawn, chasin' after her! They swoop on by, yellin' stuff an' preparin' theys' spells. I guess they's playin' tag er sumthin'. Strange, grown adults carryin' on like that!

When I leans against the bench, me head bumps inta sumthin', and when I turns around I sees that there's this pretty crystal-lookin' gizmo with a

People starts poppin' in an' landin' all over th' Square... all wearin them Navigator rings!

chain sittin' on the bench. I figger I kin give it to some pretty lady I meets later on (but hopefully not in *this* town, the way people seem ta act!) an' puts it around me neck. There's a smudge o' dirt on it, tho, so I rubs it a bit ta clean it up, an' suddenly I kin feel the thoughts o' dozens o' people!

Now this is kinda scary fer me, cuz I usually have a hard enough time collectin' me *own* thoughts much less everbody elses'. It's especially rough right now, cuz the people what's thinkin' I kin feel, seem to be having some kinda argument about what I guess is a critter called an *ook*, an' they is arguin' sumthin' fierce! Seems some people believe in this *ook* critter, an in a whole buncha other strange stuff too, like a *mo-dumb* critter an' some kinda new armor called *e mail*.

The other folks, they don't seem ta believe in *ooks*, an they seems purty upset that the believin' folks are trying ta spread their views in alla other peoples' heads. Now frankly, I don't believe in no *ook* or no *mo-dumb*, an' I never seen no *e mail* afore, but if folks wants ta believe, that's awrite with me. But my momma always told me ta never, ever force me religion on other people, so I thinks that they who believes in *ooks* and sech should keep it outta other peoples' heads. Religion should be a private kinda thing.

So I'm sittin there ponderin' *ooks* and *mo-dumbs*, an' wonderin' which one would be tougher ta kill, when suddenly I gets this strange feelin' I'm bein' watched. I glance around, an' I sees this miniature paintin' just hangin' there in the air, an' it's gettin' bigger an' bigger, an' I sees this creature in the middle of it! I gets scared an' covers me eyes, an' when I looks up there's this short, round, hairy little critter lookin' at me, an' he sez he's a Kodos. So now I'm wonderin' what a Kodos is, an' if it's related to an *ook*, when this Kodos critter rubs *his* amulet (so much fer surprisin' that girl; I betcha she has one too!) an' then I hear him thinkin', "Mass Guar din Tee Ess!"

Now, I ain't all that bright, but I ain't none too dumb, neither, so I figgered right away that I must be in that Tee Ess place, but fer the life o' me I couldna see what was there worth guar din' 'cept fer a few acorns lyin' on the ground! I figgered I should do my part guar din' the place, tho, an' I stood up an' got out me sword an' shield, an' that's when the *mass* part come.

Lordy, the people that starts poppin' in, left and right! They was comin' from *everplace*, an' landin' all over th' square. They was tall people, an' short people, an' dwarf-lookin' people, an' elfies, an' some more o' them Kodos critters, an' they was *all* wearin' them Navigator rings! I was afeard someone was gonna land on me, so I hid unner th' bench. An' that's where I'm gonna stop talkin' fer now, cuz I'm purty thirsty an' I gots ta wait fer these folks ta go away so's I can come out an' get me a drink.

Jeepers, now I's tired, hungry, thirsty, sore and confused! An' sick o' hidin' unner this here bench! I shore wish Bleeds would show up! ❖

(Same Old Song, continued from page 11)
where, or anything, just that he had died before I was born. That was fine by me. Most of the humans in our town were prejudiced against elves. They never treated me badly because they loved my mother so, but I learned early on to let my hair grow long enough to cover my ears. In that way, everyone could believe that I was just a slender, lithe human boy, more graceful than most girls.

"Tell me Contra, what do you wish to be?" my mother asked.
"A bard, just like you," I replied seriously.
"And a bard you shall be, my son."

We never seemed to want for anything. My mother would make money from the inns singing and from her forays into the wilds killing lesser orcs and goblins. There were no other bards in town, and folks would give her a silver or two for identifying and appraising objects. She also received a large annual sum of silver, part of an inheritance from a rich uncle of hers.

My musical talents were apparent at a very young age; I learned to play the mandolin and harp and my voice was quite good. I'd fence with my mother, helping her keep her edge while learning the sword myself. When I was 10 years old, my course became clear on the day I was out with Gwen on one of her hunting forays. She had just consigned two orcs to their maker and was kneeling down to search and skin them, when a third orc jumped out of the nearby bushes. Screaming his rage, swinging his cudgel high and aiming straight for her head, Gwen did not have a chance to defend herself. Suddenly, the orc stopped dead in his tracks and fell to the ground snoring. Gwen turned just in time to see me making the final gestures to the *Sleep* spell. Wasting no time, she jumped up and beheaded the foul creature with one stroke.

Turning her gaze towards me, her eyes filled with questioning and amusement, she said, "Contra? Where did you learn to do that?"

"Why, I just made the same gestures and utterings that you do when you cast that spell. Did I do something wrong, Mother?"

Laughing as she picked me up in her arms, she swung me around and said, "No, dearest, I'm just pleased that you are one who can utilize the Essence of this world. Tell me Contra, what do you wish to be?"

"A bard, just like you."

"And a bard you shall be, my son."

I spent the next five years learning all that I could at my mother's side. Our swordplay became more intense as I grew in skill and finally surpassed her, never telling her about the times I would steal away and learn from the town's guards. I learned how to sing to an object, weaving Essence all around it with my song, while it sang to me about its value in silver as well as any other secrets it might hold. We'd spend many nights at The Troll Bridge, our village inn, singing duets while she played the harp and I the mandolin. Finally, a week after my fifteenth birthday, I went to Gwendolyn and begged her to teach me more.

She looked at me sadly and said, as she shook her head, "Contra, I cannot teach you any more." Seeing the surprised look on my face, she continued, "I've taught you all that I can. You know every spell I know, you best me at swordplay with ease these days. I simply have nothing left to teach you."

"But what shall I do with myself?"

"Contra, you can no longer hide from the truth. I've known for some time now that you were not meant to stay in Belryn Keep; you are meant for greater things. If you'd only stop and think, you would realize it's true, no matter how much we wish it weren't."

"Where shall I go?" But I knew even as I asked the question aloud, and she could see the look in my eyes.

"Yes, my son, Kelfour's Landing is where you shall seek and find your destiny. You've heard the travelers' tales. It is besieged by creatures and many people have congregated there to fight them off. There you will learn more about being a bard in one year than in 10 years here. Perchance, you may even meet Lord Enegue Lionheart."

"Come with me, Mother!"

"No, I fear I'm too old. Besides, the people of Belryn Keep need me and so I must stay."

"Well, I guess it's settled. I'll leave next week."

"Remember Contra, I'll always love you, and you'll always be welcome here."

❖❖❖❖

Looming before me was the main gate to Kelfour's Landing. What lay behind it besides the town? What things awaited me? Full of anxiety, I approached the gate and banged my fist upon its wood. A voice cried from above me, "Who goes there?"

Looking up I saw the guard in the tower. I froze, not knowing what to do.

"Who goes there?"

The silence was deafening. My fear rose; I felt almost strangled by it.

"Who's out there, Darryn?"

"It must be some poor, feeble-minded sod. He won't answer me. Go on! Get out of here! We'll not have the likes of you here!"

With that he began to turn his back on me, when suddenly, piping up from deep inside me, I knew what I must say. "Wait!! It is I, Contra Songstren, bard of Belryn Keep. I am here to fight for Kelfour's Landing!"

The guard seemed to reflect for a moment and then shouted down to the gatekeeper, "Go ahead and open the gate, Jordan. It seems as if we have a new citizen to Kelfour's Landing." And with a smug, satisfied smile, he resumed his watch, on guard for trouble of any kind.

(Continued on page 15)

(Same Old Song, continued from page 14)

I made my way through the town until I reached the Town Square. There I saw dwarves, elves, halflings, half-elves and humans of all the heroic professions lying and sitting about the park—chatting, singing, healing, and picking chests. I stood there with my mouth agape taking it all in when this elf turned towards me and said, "Hello there, are you new here? What's your name? I'm Thalior Farthor. I'm a sorcerer."

"Contra, Contra Songstren, bard" I whispered as I continued to look about.

"Well, Contra, Contra Songstren, bard," he grinned, "you look rather hearty, why don't you accompany me to the Coastal Cliffs for a nymph hunt?"

Nodding my agreement, he led me back out through the gate and up what I later learned was Merchant's Road. He told me that he was in his seventh year of studying sorcery. I quickly told him my history and training. I had never seen a sorcerer before, but I soon got used to the spells he would cast. My favorite was seeing the nymphs' arms or legs twitch in pain. We hunted there for quite a while, collecting treasure, whilst Thalior filled me in on the local customs, etiquette, and where I could find various town services for adventurers.

We made our way down to Mine Road. Between melees, I'd amuse Thalior with short songs and riddles. As the day drew to a close, we decided it would be best to head back to town and divvy up our booty. As we came upon the entrance to Mine Road, there were three humongous orcs searching the clearing. I looked at Thalior and said, "I've never seen orcs that big or equipped that way. What manner of creatures are they?"

"Those are greater orcs, and they are a little far from their normal demesne, they must be looking to expand into new territory. Hah! Little do they know, their flesh is going to expand for our swords!" And with that, he gave a battle cry and charged in the gang of greater orcs.

I stood in stunned silence, watching the fury that is Thalior. While swinging his blade into one orc, he cast *Word of Bleeding* onto another, causing great spurts of blood to erupt from the huge beast. Not wanting to miss any of the action, I lunged at the third orc. My sword caught him in the forearm and I twisted my wrist. Blood began to flow from its arm in the shape of a huge C. Thalior grinned as he killed the last of the orcs he was fighting and said, "You might want to take up wood carving with a finely honed skill such as that."

As we came upon the entrance to Mine Road, there were three humongous orcs searching the clearing. I looked at Thalior and said, "I've never seen orcs that big or equipped that way."

"I'll show you carving, Thal!" I lashed out with my sword again, this time carving a S in the other arm.

"Not bad, bard, not bad. Now, do you need me to show you how to kill an orc or are you through playing with him?" Thalior bent down to search the two orcs he had killed. My orc suddenly jumped away from me, bent down, grabbed some dirt and flung it into my eyes. I yelled my dismay and by the time I got the dirt out of my eyes, I could see the orc running for his life down the bank. I started to give chase, but Thalior grabbed me by the arm and said, "Leave him, we've got too much booty as it is. Let's go."

"All right. I'll show some mercy and leave him to die from his wounds."

Back in town, we split up our treasure and Thalior introduced me to several more people, all whom he considered friend. Thus began my first day in my new home, and already I was becoming more wealthy and famous.

Over the next three years, my life was filled with learning new spells from the bards in town, and killing creatures surrounding the town. I even met Lord Enegue, and he deigned to teach me a trick or two that I could handle at my stage of training. I angered some with my carefree ways, but I knew most appreciated the light words from my mouth that would oft bring a smile to the face. My bank account grew; I bought better weapons. Life was good and just when I thought it couldn't get any better, it did.

I was leaning against one of the benches in Town Square, musing about my recent battles and reflecting on ways that I could have done better when a soft, sweet voice interrupted my thoughts.

"Excuse me, are you a bard?"

"At your service," I said through closed eyes.

"Would you sing to this gem? I want to know if it's imbeddable."

"Certainly, why not."

As I opened my eyes, I gazed upon the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I stared openly at her. I think my tongue lolled from my mouth. She, in turn, suddenly peered into my eyes and said, "You've got the

(Continued on page 17)

Moonglum's Less-Than-Excellent Misadventure by Moonglum of Elwher

Twas one tired evening quite late,
When my wit I chose to
demonstrate,
In quiet Town Square,
(Something quite rare),
I spied a Lord asleep in his cape.

Lordthief Sagan sat sleeping,
Dreaming of critters he was reaping,
A pastime of the old,
But all said and told,
Better than him out stalking and
sneaking.

Many people tried to get his
attention,
Their names I don't need to
mention,
They yelled and hugged,
They tapped and rubbed,
Someone even suggested a lynchin'.

This effort was to no avail,
The Lord would answer no hail,
Yet I had a way,
Though risky some say,
I knew could not possibly fail.

I announced that I had a good joke,
About the ways of some evil folk,
I devised such a plan,
To wake this High Man,
Hoping he was not a humorless
bloke.

I made mirth of the group's retirement
plan,
I must say the joke was quite grand,
All had a chuckle,
Some sides did buckle,
Then Sagan awoke and did stand.

He spoke not but went straight to his
work,
Grabbing my arm with a firm jerk,
Pulling and dragging,
My cloak all a'snagging,
The town breach marked the end of my
smirk.

Lord Sagan did not seem amused,
Of a big mouth was I accused!
He made a few signs,
I thought quite benign,
Till I fell and my bottom was bruised.

Knowing sure death when I see it,
And not wanting to be further hit,
I got to my feet,
And beat a retreat,
Before the Lord gave me a head
crit.

Much did I hide and evade,
Feeling for my joke I had paid,
My butt was sore,
Walking was a chore,
So I felt full atonement was
made.

To bring this long tale to an
end,
I eventually paid dear for my sin,
While hacking a merc,
I turned with a jerk,
And there saw Lord Sagan's wide
grin.

The battle was a short 1- swing fight,
And seeing as might makes right,
I will not be a pest,
And no longer jest,
About the Counsel of <ACK!!!>

Moonlglum bit the dust (again)!!

(Same Old Song, continued from page 15)
most interesting eyes. Why, they're green, blue, brown and…"

"Multi-hued," I choked. "Part of my elven heritage." My mind raced, but I soon regained control. "My name is Contra, and you are?"

"Kaerilyn. Kaerilyn Brevin."

"Kaerilyn," I loved the sound of her name on my tongue, "I will sing to your gem, but on one condition."

"Oh, Contra, I really don't have much money. I can't afford to…"

"The condition being that you allow me to take you for dinner and ale."

She smiled, thought a moment and said, "Now isn't that mighty forward? I don't know, my mother warned me about half-elven bards." As I began to protest she added, "But I never really listened to my mother anyway."

As we made our way towards the Threk, I asked, "And what do you do?"

"I'm in my first year of training as a thief," she said impishly. I began to check my pockets when she added, "And I never steal from my friends."

"Am I your friend, then?"

"Maybe, we'll have to see how tonight goes, won't we, Contra?"

"Kaerilyn, I hate to say it, but I think you've stolen from me already!"

As a look of alarm began to spread across her face, and the protestations were on her lips. I put my finger on them, looked her in the eyes and said, "I'm afraid you may have already stolen my heart." And quickly stole a kiss from my thief.

During the next several years, Kaerilyn and I were inseparable. We'd spend the days hunting in the Kaldsfang forest, and the nights curled up together in front of the fire. We both continued to grow in experience and knowledge within our respective professions. I'd often entertain folks around the Town Square with my music and she'd provide picking services to those returning from the surrounding area with chests. People used to joke that we made a perfect team—while everyone would be listening to my music, she could more easily pick their pockets. One night while singing at the Threk, I stood and announced, "I'd like to dedicate this next song to Kaerilyn Brevin, a woman who has come to mean everything to me. Hopefully, by the time I finish this song, she'll be able to answer this question." Kaerilyn looked questioningly at me. "Kaerilyn, will you take me as your husband?" I winked at her as I broke into my song. When I had finished, I looked over at her and could see tears glistening in the corners of her eyes. She came up to me and playfully punched me in the arm.

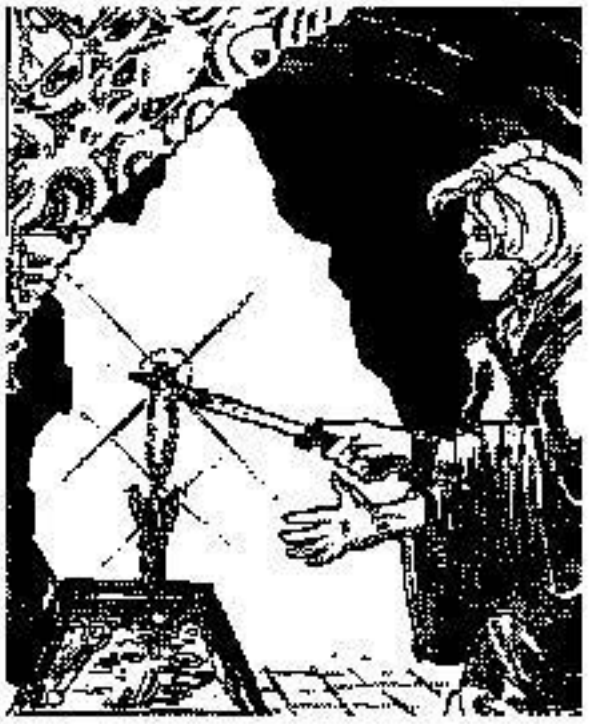
"You fool!" she exclaimed. "I didn't need the length of the song to answer!" As she nodded her head in agreement, I drew her in an embrace. She moved her head to the side and whispered, "What took you so long, you out-of-key crooner?"

The wedding was set for the following year. On my twenty-fourth birthday, we decided to celebrate with a picnic in the Kaldsfang forest, near the brook and bridge just before Mine Road. We spread out our blanket and opened the basket, pulling out our bottle of wine, hunks of cheese, and dried meat.

Later, I was leaning against a tree with her in my arms. I began singing a little tune with her name in it, and the strangest thing began to occur. The Essence began to weave itself around her, much in the same manner as when I assess the value of an object. Then, the Essence began surrounding me as well. Not wanting to break the spell, I continued to sing. Finally, the Essence slowly lowered itself into Kaerilyn and myself. A sudden feeling of unity with Kaerilyn overcame me. I knew things about her that she had never told me. We both gasped at the same time, and she said, "The strangest feeling just came over me, like…"

"I know, I felt it too. I never realized such a thing was possible."

We held each other closer and didn't say another word. Near the end of the day, as we were gathering our things, I grabbed her and tried to steal a quick kiss. Laughing, she pushed me



"I'm in my first year of training as a thief," she said impishly, "And I never steal from friends."

away and said, "You'll not steal things so easily from this thief." Then she ran from me, giggling mischievously.

I gave pursuit, but tripped over the roots of the tree we had been leaning on. Pushing myself up from the ground, I saw the top of her head as she disappeared over a hill. As I reached the top of the hill, I looked around all that I could see. Kaerilyn was not in sight. The forest was particularly dense at the bottom of the hill, and I surmised she was hiding within. I began calling, "Kaerilyn! Kaerilyn! Come on, it's getting late! We need to head back now!" A high-pitched scream piercing the solitude of the forest was my reply…❖

[To be continued.]

(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 12)

"Just thought if you were going to mention my cave, you should see the whole thing. Though that's it. I have just the three rooms.

I smiled. "Just enough for what you need, eh?"

"I'm a simple person." Kygar smiled back.

Designing GameMaster's Credo

I thought for a moment, then asked "Of all the areas you have designed, which one did you like the best?"

"The Seolfar Strake," he answered promptly. "Including the smoky caverns and Lake Marliese."

"What are the smoky caverns?" I wondered if I had been there yet.

"Smoky Caverns are where the fire cats and fire rats are. I love hunting there because it is so chaotic and fast paced." Kygar smiled happily. "Good for a mid-level fighter."

"Oh! I *have* been there." I nodded at him, and grinned. "It *is* a fun place. Just my speed."

"And I like Lake Marliese because I like to play in the water." He smirked a little. "Odd behavior for a dwarf, but the water there is shallow."

"Oh yes? Tell that to Dirtbeard" I giggled, thinking of the other dwarf's reaction to the lake. "Now, Lake Marliese is the project you and Fawn worked on?"

Kygar nodded. "Part of it I did with Fawn."

"I know that you trained her, but who trained you?"

"Well, I was kind of a product of opportunity. I worked with Gira for a while, then with Reline, and then pretty much on my own."

"How do you even begin to design your critters or areas? What are your preliminary thought processes?"

"Well, there are two distinct approaches to creature and area design. I use the one appropriate for the purpose at the time. For example, the first approach is meeting a need. This usually involves working with creatures, but can also include area design. If we have a specific need, a niche that needs to be filled, a gap in advancement progression, etc., then I approach the creature from the angle of saying, 'This creature needs to have X OB, and Y DB and these special abilities.' An example of this is the kral out in Seolfar Strake. The original design concept for that area did not include the presence of kral. However, we had a specific need to fill with some mid-level, straightforward fighting creatures. I decided to do some kral, since things like orcs and trolls had been done to excess already." I nodded in agreement and appreciation of his grasp of things.

"I knew what combat stats I was after, so the design of the kral themselves was fairly easy–creatures that would swing a weapon, and present no special or unusual combat abilities. However, simple fighter creatures tend to be a little dull, so I threw in some extra pumas to kick the frenzy level up a bit, and then added the spellcasting warfarers as an extra, and I hope exciting, challenge for that location. The area of the Hidden Valley and the creatures there were born straight from a need for those creatures, and they are pretty much founded in straight, 'mechanical' considerations (game mechanics).

"The second approach is to come up with a concept or a 'main thread' and then to allow an area and the creatures to grow up around that concept. I think of this as a 'natural-growth' design, rather than addressing some specific need. Most of the Seolfar Strake, Monastery and areas beyond the Monastery are of this design concept. Because they are 'natural-growth' design, they do not always address the needs of every character class or type. I don't see a problem with that, and make no apologies for it. If there are 'gaps' in the area or creatures, then those gaps can be filled by other areas and other creatures.

"When I started on the Seolfar Strake, I decided to have a natural sylvan setting in the foothills of a mountain, along with some buried ruins that contained a gate to a more remote and exotic locale. After looking at the Quellbourn map, I decided on Seolfar Strake as the location, since that was a previously untouched area of the island. Having a general idea of the setting and situation, I then had to search for a theme to justify it all. I read through a lot of background material

about Kulthea, looking for a good plot to have it all revolve around. I settled on an Unlife invasion theme, but wanted to add a twist that had not yet been explored. The background material made it clear that the Unlife and the Lords of Charon had worked together during the Wars of Dominion. I selected that as the theme.

"Anyone who has not read the additional background material about the Monastery and areas beyond that are in the Tomes of Kulthea should do that. The legends and information that I came up with are not official RM material, so the only place you will find them is in the Tomes. Reading those should explain the exact history and plot of the area, though it does not give you every possible detail. Only after I have written a history and background foundation for an area like this, do I actually start building. I think the effect in the Seolfar Strake works. The approach is quiet and sylvan, with nary a hint of the dark struggle that takes place within the mountain. The Monastery itself fits the historical purpose for which it was designed, and that was to guard against intrusions of the Unlife through the gate that is located there. By reading the history and then really exploring and looking at the Monastery itself you can easily get

(Continued on page 24)

Trachten's Travels

Foraging for Fun, Profit and Information

By lord Trachten Hickapod

Let me begin by saying that I've put in more hours on this article than any other I've ever written, yet I am less than satisfied with the completeness of the information I'm about to give you. According to highly placed sources, all of the herbs available from the shop in town are forageable somewhere (excluding potions of course). Four herbs remain unfound to this day, however. Those herbs are *gariig* (CPs), *hegheg* (light head scars), *curfalaka* (medium limb scars), and *yuth* (medium/heavy nervous system scars).

Keys to Successful Foraging

Now, let's examine how to forage effectively for those herbs that have been located. Each time you forage you get an open 1d100 roll. The result is compared to an invisible threshold, which is different for each herb. If you roll over the threshold, you are successful. There are several factors which can raise and lower the success threshold:

- kneeling: lowers threshold
- empty hand(s): one hand free lowers some, two even more
- hand scars: raise threshold
- forage spell: lowers threshold
- level: higher level lowers threshold
- profession: rangers have lowest thresholds, mages and sorcerers highest
- environment: the area where you can find an herb may be less than perfect for that herb, raising the threshold

In the table I give approximate thresholds for the various herbs. The numbers show what a Level 45 ranger who has the forage spell up, is kneeling, and has both hands free must roll to find that herb. Your threshold will be higher, but the relative difference between herbs should be somewhat consistent. One important feature to note, if your left hand is not free, the herb will be left on the ground.

Right Place at the Right Time

Now, you want to make sure you are looking in the right place. You can tell if it is possible to find a particular herb in the room you are foraging in by looking at the failure message. If it ends in "...nothing of interest," you are looking in the wrong place, but if it ends in "...nothing," then that room contains the herb you are foraging for.

Please note that in my chart, if you see "abundant" that means almost every room in that area grows the herb.

After you've found an herb, the room you foraged in is depleted for awhile. After finding three herbs in a segment, the whole segment is depleted. Afer about an hour, the herbs tend to regenerate in an area, I believe, but that time frame is very approximate. You can tell if the room is depleted because you get the message "...someone has been foraging here recently..." when you should have successfully gotten the herb.

Bundling Those Bulky Herbs

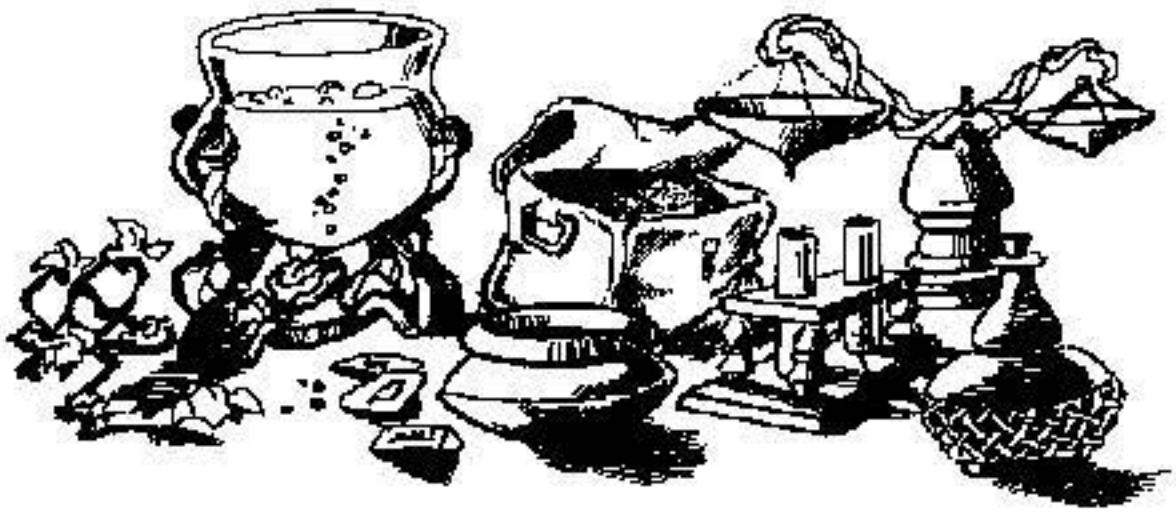
Foraging has one major problem (besides the missing hot climate herbs). Each herb foraged takes up one slot in your inventory. The ability to clump herbs together into single items with multiple doses must be implemented before foraging is really useful. As it stands today, foraging is mostly used to find sticks to imbue into imbeddable wands and rods.

Another suggestion to make foraging more popular is to implement a skill which would allow a skilled ranger to survey an entire segment and tell what herbs grow there. The ranger would still have to forage around to find the correct room, but the missing herbs (and extensive foraging maps) would be taken care of.

What follows on the next four pages are tables for use in foraging. I attempted to make them as accurate as possible, and have added notes where relevant.

Afer all that foraging, I'm exhausted! I think I'll sit back and relax with a nice cup of herb tea! ❖

[See pp. 20-23 following for all of Lord Trachten's foraging tables.]



According to highly placed sources, all the herbs available in Kelfour's Landing are forageable somewhere or another, except for potions.

Heals	Name	RT	Thrsh	Cost	Foraging Locations
10cp	Akbutege	5	V Easy	45	supposedly all climates
					Black Sands (abundant)
					Beach Area (abundant)
					Rock Shore (abundant)
					Kelfour's Exterior
10cp	Dugmuthur	5	Easy	NA	high, cool
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
					Upper Kaldsfang, Blototh
10cp	Mirenna	5	Easy	NA	cold hills and mountains
					Blototh
					Blototh, Glacier
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
30cp?	Garug	5	Easy	NA	desert
					Unknown
5-50cp?	Yavethalion	6	Normal	NA	beach, saltwater
					Black Sands
					Kelfour's Exterior
15-60cp	Gusarnar	8	Normal	NA	cold, barren
					Blototh
					Upper Kaldsfang, Outside Inn (abundant)
Head1	Rewk		NA	84	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist
Head23	Arfandas	5	Normal	281	cold, wet/near river
					Kelfour's, Exterior
Head15	Hegheg	10	Hard	113	hot, humid
					Unknown
Head23S	Bursthelas	NA	NA	563	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist
Limb1	Arnumnas	5	V Easy	56	grasslands, hills
					Kelfour's, Exterior
					Upper Kaldsfang
					Lower Dragonsfang, Grasslands
					Seolfar Strake, Ruined Village
					Valley

Heals	Name	RT	Thrsh	Cost	Foraging Locations
Limb23	Edram	10	Hard	141	cold, wet/near streams
					Upper Kaldsfang
					Kelfour's, Exterior
Limb1S	Dagmather	5	Normal	56	desert
					Upper Kaldsfang, Outside Inn (abundant)
Limb2S	Curfalaka	8	Normal	281	warm, moist
					Unknown
Limb3S	Siran	10	Normal	~2k	unknown, look for dried plant
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
					Upper Kaldsfang, Outside Inn (abundant)
Organ1	Berterin	5	Easy	113	temperate, deciduous
					Blototh
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
					Upper Kaldsfang, ?
					Kelfour's, Exterior
					Coastal Cliffs, Overgrown Path (abundant)
					Seolfar Strake
Organ23	Pasamar	5	V.Hard	450	hot, humid, sunny
					Man'Ta Pn'Tairken, Broken Plain (abundant)
					Lower Kaldsfang, Forest
Organ1S	Tarnas	NA	NA	225	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist
Orgn23S	Wekwek	NA	NA	563	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist (not for lvl3 eye injuries)
Organ3S	Baldakur	NA	NA	900	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist (only for lvl3 eye injuries)
Nerve1	Wifurwif (1)	8	Normal	56	cold, dark/cave
					Cave, Drip Room
					Cave
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
					Upper Kaldsfang, ?
					Upper Kaldsfang, Blototh
					Sea Cave
					Sea Cave, Small Passage
					Coastal Cliffs, Wrecked Village (abundant)

Heals	Name	RT	Thrsh	Cost	Foraging Locations
Nerve23	Belrama		NA	113	Potion
					Must buy from herbalist
Nerve13	Terbas	5	Easy	112	mild climate/trees
					Blototh
					Forest Path
					High Ridge
					Upper Kaldsfang (danjirland)
					Upper Kaldsfang
					Upper Kaldsfang, Foothills
					Upper Kaldsfang, Blototh
					Kelfour's, Exterior
					Kelfour's, Exterior (near breach)
					Coastal Cliffs, Overgrown Path (abundant)
					Seolfar Strake
Nerv23S	Yuth	10	V Hard	450	hot, humid, dark
					Unknown
Fluff	Flower	5	Easy	NA	apparently in grassy areas
	Daisy				Upper Kaldsfang (danjirland)
	Rose				Lower Dragonsfang, Grasslands
					Valley
					Seolfar Strake, Ruined Village
Fluff	Spearmint	6	V Easy	NA	grassy or cultivated
					Upper Kaldsfang (danjirland)
					Kelfour's, Exterior
					Kelfour's, Exterior (near breach)
					Lower Dragonsfang, Grasslands
Imbue	Stick	5	Easy	NA	near trees
	Branch				Practically any place outdoors. If you don't
	Club				find a stick in your room, move one room
					away and odds are you will find one there.

Price shown is initial (no haggling) price per dose at shop.

Organ = eye, abdomen, back, chest (except lvl3 eye)

Difficulty thresholds for me (yours will most likely be higher): Very Hard > 100; Hard = 80-100; Normal = 50-79; Easy = 30-49; Very Easy < 30

Listed below are two charts detailing some of the messages received while foraging.

The first chart breaks down the messages and distribution of herbs. Note that the failure message is slightly different if the herb does not grow in that room, as opposed to the message for the herb being available there, but depleted or the herb being there and you failing to find it.

The second chart indicates the types of foraging fumbles and their damage, round times and other consequences. ❖

Herb Frequency	Success Message	Failure Message
Herb Never Found in Room	As you carefully forage around you can find no hint of what you are looking for. You are not even sure it could be found here.	You forage around but find nothing of interest.
Herb Found in Room but Room or Area Depleted	As you forage around you notice that someone has been foraging here recently and you are unable to find anything useful.	You forage around but find nothing.
Herb is in Room and Available	You carefully forage and manage to find some...	You forage around but find nothing.

RT/Damage	Fumble Messages
Normal RT	You clumsily forage around and find nothing.
Normal RT + 3	You stumble about in a fruitless attempt at foraging.
Normal RT + 10 + Level 1 Hand Damage	As you forage around you suddenly feel a sharp pain in your left/right hand.
? RT + Poison 10/2	You begin to forage around when your hand comes into contact with something that stabs you in the finger.
Normal RT + Poison 5/1	You begin to forage around when suddenly you feel a burning sensation in your hand.
Normal RT + 5	You fumble so badly on your unsuccessful search that you can only hope no one was watching you.
RT 1 + Level 1 Hand Damage + Prone	You forage around for a moment, but then... Ow! You grab something sharp! You fall to the ground in surprise!
Level 1 Hand Damage	You have just begun to forage when you feel a sharp pain in your left/right hand.

(Interview with Kygar, continued from page 18)
a feel for the centuries of dedicated labor that the monks served. You can understand how their increased isolation from the rest of the world made them lonely and restless. In the end, they succumbed to the very powers that they were set to guard against and became servants of the very powers that they opposed. It's a tragic tale I guess." Kygar smiled a little.

"In any event, given that tale it was easy for the creatures to develop themselves. The wild creatures in the outer Strake are natural for that setting. The spectral monks and monastic liches in the Monastery are a very natural result of the history of the place. The general abilities of all these creatures are pretty natural."

"The area beyond the Monastery is an extension of the story. It was all developed in the same way. There is a theme and tale behind all of it, and in light of that theme it all makes sense. I don't want to go into Man'Ta Pn'Tairken in too much detail because there are some (hopefully) neat things there for people to discover on their own. I can only encourage people to look beyond the surface. Dig into the Tomes and find the stories that give it all meaning. My areas and creatures are more than simple conglomerates of game mechanics. They have purpose and reason behind them, well most of them anyway, and by understanding that reason you should be better able to discover how to deal with them." He chuckled to himself. "Hmm, that was a pretty long answer."

I smiled at Kygar. "Well, I'm not complaining." I gave him a wink. "It's always nice to know why and how. It tends to make me appreciate the areas I walk through even more." I stood up, and tucked my writing paraphernalia back into my satchel. "And I suppose I should really been going. Thank you for sharing your time, and submitting to all my questions." I grinned, glad of the knowledge that he wasn't an ogre from a fairy tale after all. In fact, he was beginning to remind me more and more of the hero, or at least the wizard, of the tale.

He bowed and said, "OK, anything else you think of to ask me, don't hesitate." He chuckled, then exclaimed as I was heading out of the cave, "Oh, and Artuero for Constable!"

I laughed out loud. With a cheerful wave, I headed out into the cool air of another Kulthean evening, whistling softly to myself. ❖

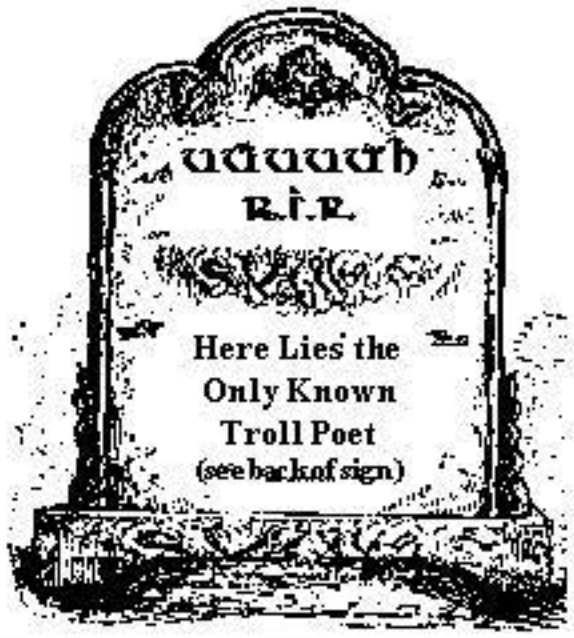
(Cave Troll Blues, continued from page 5)
began to mumble incoherently and drifted off into his final sleep. Although Uuuuuh had told me that troll burial customs required that the deceased be torn limb from limb and devoured, I settled on digging him a grave beside the mine entrance. I returned Uuuuuh's piece of wood to its place above his grave, carefully turning the poem against the wall in deference to his wishes.

Uuuuuh's poem follows along with my rough translation. The reader must keep in mind that the written troll language has no punctuation and so the poem as written by Uuuuuh is one run-on sentence. When he spoke the poem to me he punctuated it with grunts, growls, and a great deal of waving of the arms. My translation is meant to convey a bit of his nonverbal communication as well: *it grorkenk akt tikrelk ut grorkenk akt preng gunkikt gret akt ak grorkenk akt akt klaktrik, akt aktrik uk grorkenk akt akt reng.*

For your benefit, I have roughly translated it as:

I had five dwarves.
I played troll hockey.
I had four dwarves left.
An evil wizard attacked me.
I had three dwarves left.
I prepared my dinner.
I had one dwarf left.
I died.

I have no doubt that this poem would be typical of troll art if it were not the only example of it. Actually, I once came upon a goblin that had met an untimely end apparently by being repeatedly struck against a tree. At the time the troll prints nearby made me believe that a troll had been trying to cut down the tree and only realized after some time that he was swinging a goblin and not an ax. Now I wonder if I did not perhaps stumble upon a troll art gallery of sorts. Perhaps there are many trolls with the souls of artists struggling to be understood by their families and friends.



I dug him a grave beside the Mine Entrance. I returned Uuuuuh's piece of wood to its place above his grave, carefully turning the poem against the wall.

For those interested in the troll language, you can find a troll dictionary in the Tomes under the key word (you guessed it) *troll*.

For the more practical, who prefer to kill trolls rather than engage them in debate, some information about cave trolls is herewith offered, along with information on the nasty worms that crawl about the mine. To find cave trolls in the mine, take the first west exit from the main shaft. Cave trolls can also be found in Danjirland carrying different equipment. Until recently, brave adventurers might have encountered cave trolls in the Claedesbrim region, but Dark Lord Estrion has claimed the castle there for his own and has yet to throw a housewarming party. ❖